

Community Development Connection

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Office of Community Development Department - Town of Amherst

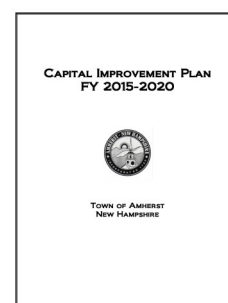


Capital Improvements Plan FY 2015—FY 2020

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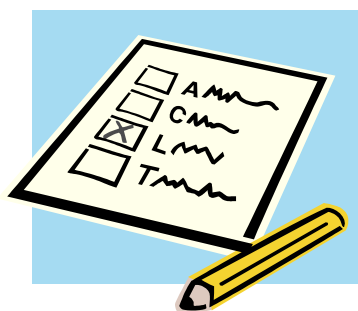
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The Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is a program authorized by State law to link local infrastructure investments with long-term planning including: master plan goals, land use ordinances, and economic development. The plan is an annually evolving document, updated to reflect new information, project requests, and any changing conditions in the community. Amherst's last CIP was completed in 2006. The Planning Board made it a priority in 2013 to revive this annual process, to provide a tool to the Town and School Districts' budget processes, which outlines the capital needs of the community over the next six budget cycles.



At the same time the CIP Process was being re-invigorated, the Board of Selectmen began leading the development of a Town Strategic Plan. While the CIP and the Strategic Plan are designed to complement each other, in this initial year there may be some inconsistencies due largely to the timing of each documents development. The goal of future CIP annual updates is for project requests to directly reflect each Department's Strategic Plan, creating two documents that outline a long-term plan for the community. (Continued on p.2...)

Did You Know— Changes to the Zoning Ordinance?

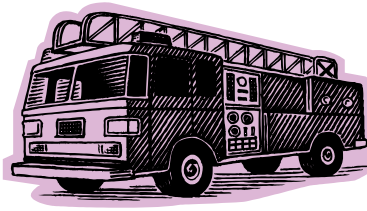


NH State law prescribes the two options for a town to adopt or modify the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance is the legislatively (approved by the voters) adopted ordinance dividing the Town into zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas, to reflect the Master Plan.

Option 1—Planning Board: The Planning Board can create and put forth a proposed zoning ordinance in accordance with NH RSA 675:3, after holding at least one public hearing. The proposed zoning ordinance can officially be posted a maximum of 120 days prior to the Town vote. Once posted the proposed ordinance takes effect until the voters approve or deny the zoning changes on the ballot at the March vote.

Option 2—Citizen Petition: Twenty-five or more registered voters can create a petition zoning warrant article in accordance with NH RSA 675:4 to change the Zoning Ordinance. The petition warrant article must be turned in to the Town Clerk between 120 days and 90 days prior to the March vote. The Planning Board is required to hold a public hearing on the petition and shall place the petition on the ballot. No changes can be made to Petition Warrant articles. The Planning Board is required to vote on each citizens petition, and their approval or disapproval shall be noted on the ballot directly under the ballot question.

Capital Improvements Plan FY 2015—FY 2020 (continued...)



(Continued...) Over the past two fiscal years the Town has operated under a default budget, and for several years prior to the default, many of the proposed capital reserve warrant articles were defeated. The significant budgetary setbacks of the past several years have hindered the Town's ability to adequately fund fleet vehicle replacements and perform needed maintenance to roads and facilities. For these reasons and more, the CIP Committee feels the Town needs to make a significant investment in its fleet of Fire and DWP vehicles, and the many projects which have continuously been pushed off for future funding. It is for this reason that the proposed CIP has a significant number of projects included in FY 2015. These projects can no longer be postponed; they are vital to this community and will only increase the tax impact the longer they are delayed.

In addition, the extent of rust damage on DPW, EMS and Fire vehicles was a significant cause of concern for the CIP Committee. It was noted repeatedly, that Amherst's vehicles 'rust out before they wear out'. The CIP Committee strongly supports the need for a wash station for all Town vehicles and space to adequately shelter DPW, EMS and Fire vehicles. The CIP Committee hopes the 'On the Horizon' project associated with a wash station will move ahead in planning over the next year to become part of the CIP.

The adopted Capital Improvements Plan FY 2015-2020 is available at the Library, Office of Community Development (temporarily located at the Fire Department facility) and online at the Capital Improvement Plan Committee's webpage. If you have questions or would like further information please contact Sarah Marchant at smarchant@amherstnh.gov.



Proposed Zoning Amendments

The Planning Board has held several worksessions to discuss potential zoning changes beyond the updates to the Wetlands, Watershed and Aquifer districts. The proposed "administrative" zoning changes fall into 4 categories. The following is a brief outline of the proposed changes, for the full text of the proposed changes please contact the Community Development Office or see [2014 Zoning Changes](#) webpage.

- Sections 4.11 Wetlands Conservation District, Section 4.12 Watershed Protection District** – The proposed amendments delete the existing ordinances and replace with a newly drafted combined Wetlands and Watershed Conservation District.
- Section 4.13 Aquifer Conservation District** – The proposed amendment deletes the existing ordinance and replaces it with an updated Aquifer Conservation District.
- Section 1.1 Purpose and Authority** – The proposed amendment would remove a sentence adopted in 1999 via a petition warrant article, that conflicts with State Law (RSA 674:54) and to clarify that governmental uses are exempt from Town Ordinances and Regulations. This change was recommended by Town Counsel.
- Sections 4.3.D.5 Residential/Rural, 4.4.D.4 Northern Transitional Zone (NTZ), 4.5.E.4 Northern Rural Zone (NRZ), 4.6.C.4 General Office Zone (GO), 4.7.C.8 Commercial Zone, 4.8.D.5 Limited Commercial Zone (LC), 4.9.E.8 Industrial Zone (I): Building Height and Section 9.1 Definitions** – The proposed amendments would modify the definition of structure height from 35 to 40 feet and clarify how structure height will be measured.
- Chapter A - Zoning Ordinance, Section 6 and Chapter H - Building Code/Building Ordinance, Sections 4, 7 and 16-18** – The proposed amendment would remove all references to BOCA and update the Building Codes section to reflect the State adopted codes, as amended, and include the Life Safety Codes.
- Section 4.14 Affordable Housing** - To amend the current Affordable Housing ordinance to align with State law updates and reduce the allowed density.

The Planning Board Public Hearing for proposed Zoning Amendments and citizen Petition Zoning Articles to appear on the March, 2014 ballot has been scheduled for **December 18, 2013** at Souhegan High School, in the Information Center, Room 202, at 7:30 pm. For full details on the proposed zoning changes check out the [2014 Zoning Changes](#) webpage or in the Community Development Office during regular business hours.

Community Planning Grant—Next Steps:

The Planning Board and the Community Development Office were awarded a grant to combine and update the water resource ordinances with current Best Management Practices for the Watershed Conservation, Wetlands Protection, and Aquifer Conservation Districts in order to protect the high quality drinking water and watershed of the Town of Amherst and the Region. The goal of this project will be to prepare revised ordinances that reflect the goals of the Master Plan and the interests of the community for the voters to approve on the 2014 Town Ballot.



The Planning Board has been working with consultants and an Advisory Team including the Amherst Conservation Commission, Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce, Pennichuck Waterworks, and the Towns of Merrimack and Milford, along with many other stakeholder groups to help ensure the ordinance revisions will work with the breadth of the community's needs through a series of worksessions and draft ordinance revisions.

Based on feedback received from the various stakeholder groups, the Wetlands and Watershed Conservation District draft has been finalized. In addition, draft of the Aquifer Conservation District is under construction with a worksession planned for Wednesday, December 4th at Souhegan High School, Room 202. The drafts of both documents are posted on the [Special Projects](#) webpage and the [2014 Zoning Changes](#) webpage.

The first public hearing will be December 18th, at Souhegan High School, Room 202, which will include discussion on the above two ordinances and any other proposed zoning changes. If you would like to become more involved, please contact Sarah Marchant, Community Development Director, at smarchant@amherstnh.gov or 673-6041, to see how you can help.

"Making Geodatabases Work for You" Workshop, December 13, 2013 ~ 9:00am - 4:30pm, Nashua Regional Planning Commission, 9 Executive Park Drive, Merrimack, NH

This workshop is brought to you through the UNH Cooperative Extension Geospatial Technologies Training Center. Improve your GIS data storage by incorporating GDB files into your workflow. Register to ensure your spot at: https://www.events.unh.edu/RegistrationForm.pm?event_id=15796

OFFICES AT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT!

The Town Hall Offices were relocated as of July 29th to allow for the repair and replacement of Town Hall's roof and truss structures over the next several months. The offices of the Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Assessing, and Community Development (Building, Planning, Zoning, Code Enforcement, and Economic Development) have been relocated to temporary offices in the Central Fire Station Community Room, located at 177 Amherst Street. All phone numbers, email, and hours of operation will remain the same.

All Planning Board, Zoning Board, Heritage Commission, Historic District Commission, and Conservation Commission meetings have been relocated to space at Souhegan High School or the Brick School SAU building. Please check all agendas carefully as to the location of the meetings.

The repairs are now scheduled to be completed by the end of December (we hope). As soon as the work is completed, all Departments, Boards, and Commissions will head back to their normal Town Hall spaces.

Note: The Town Administration, Welfare, and Finance Departments are only accessible by appointment during construction. Please call 673-6041 x210 for Town Administration and x213 for Finance Department.



Meeting Results:



Each month this column will bring you a quick update on the results of the Zoning Board, Planning Board, and Historic District Commission's deliberations:

Zoning Board (ZBA)

The ZBA did not have a meeting in November:

PLEASE NOTE: December ZBA Meeting will be held at Souhegan High School, Information Center, Rm. 202.

Planning Board (PB)

The PB held a public hearing on November 6, 2013 to adopt the FY 2015-2020 CIP, hear two applications and one discussion.

1. **Capital Improvements Plan:** Planning Board discussion and adoption of the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) FY 2015 - FY 2020. The CIP draft is available at the Community Development Office or online at <http://amherstnh.gov/capital-improvements-plan-committee-cip/>.

The Board unanimously approved the Capital Improvements Plan for FY2015-2020 as presented by the Capital Improvements Plan Committee and discussed at the Public Hearing.

2. **Case #4503 – Countryside Self Storage – NRSP Amendment and WRMP – 6 Pine Road, PIN# 008-042-000:** Two additional storage buildings, “F” & “G” totaling 4,200 SF

The applications were approved with the following conditions:

- a. *Drainage calculations be submitted to staff.*
- b. *Fire Department approval of final design.*
- c. *Remove Sheet 1, Proposed Conditions, Note 15, requiring a Compliance Hearing.*
- d. *Add to sheet 1, Proposed Conditions, Note 14 and Sheet 2, Best Management Practices Notes, in the upper right... “no storage of” use of road salt...*
- e. *Renumber Sheet 2, Best Management Practices Notes in lower right, starting with Note 6, to coincide with numbering of notes in top right corner.*

3. **Case #4401 – Peg Bennett – NRSP Amendment – 14 Cross Road, PIN# 002-145-000:** Temporary lighting of Bean Field.

The application was tabled to the December 4, 2013 meeting to in order for the applicant to obtain a lighting plan from a professional lighting engineer that will allow for minimal impact to abutters and enough lighting for safe athletic activities.

4. **Case #4561 – Fulcrum Associates – Discussion – Limbo Lane, PIN# 020-037-000:** Potential development options for vacant lot.

The applicant provided two design options for a 12,000 SF medical office building. The Planning Board

Meeting Results (continued)

gave non-binding comments on the two proposals.

PLEASE NOTE: *The December 4th Planning Board meetings will be held at the Souhegan High School at 412 Boston Post Rd in the Information Center, Rm 202.*

Historic District Commission (HDC)

The HDC held a site walk and one public hearing on November 21st:

1. Case #4558 – Jimmy G. Vanbroeck & Kelly Wulffaert – 4 Mack Hill Road, PIN# 019-013-000 – Wooden Horse Fencing. The applicant is proposing to install wooden fencing for their horse. Findings:

1. The proposed fencing is consistent with the fencing regulations.
2. The fencing will be wooden.
3. The fencing will look like other fencing in the area.
4. The fencing and tubular metal gates have limited visibility from the road.
5. This is contributing property #168 on the Historical Inventory.
6. This is a highly visible property.

Upon a motion duly made/seconded (TV/SW), the HDC unanimously approved the application as submitted, noting that this fencing is appropriate for livestock fencing.

2. Case #4594 – Daniel & Lori Abrams – 19 Mack Hill Road, PIN# 020-020-000 – Generator. The applicant is proposing to install a stand-by generator on the property. Findings:

1. It is not a contributing property.
2. The generator will not be visible from the road.
3. This will be a standard household generator.
4. The homeowner has an underground fuel tank.
5. The homeowner will plant shrubs around the generator.

Upon a motion duly made/seconded (TV/SW), the HDC unanimously approved the application as presented.

Welcome to Amherst!

Covellite Holistics has just opened in Salzburg Square, 292 Route 101 offering a variety of services from Swedish Massage and Trigger Point Therapy, to Sport Massage and Lymphatic Facilitation.

Covellite Holistics owner Terri Tuttle, can be reached at 603-213-6932 or terri@covelliteholistics.com

Please join us in welcoming this company to Amherst!

Welcome to



Covellite Holistics
Massage • Energy • Renewal

Community Development Department - Town of Amherst

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WE ARE ON THE WEB!

WWW.AMHERSTNH.GOV

The Community Development Office strives to effectively manage community change in accordance with the Master Plan and the Town's ordinances and regulations by providing professional advice and technical expertise in a consistent and fair manner to citizens, boards, commissions, departments, and regional agencies on the implementation of land use ordinances, regulations, and policies for both the short and long term physical, natural, and economic development of the Town.

The Community Development Office is comprised of the Building, Zoning, Planning, Code Enforcement, and Economic Development Departments. The Office provides support to the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Amherst Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, Heritage Commission, and the CIP Committee. The office provides a one-stop location for all land development processing in the Town.



NRPC UPDATE



NRPC REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE

The Nashua Regional Plan is coming together and the most recent community outreach initiative is wrapping up. NRPC has hosted twelve community conversations across many sectors including veterans, disabled persons, local government, local soup kitchens, the Embracing Integration Symposium and more! A complete summary of these conversations is in progress, but if you can't wait check out this article about NRPC's involvement in the Gate City Initiative's First Embracing Integration Symposium. Our regional subcommittees are in full swing and will assist in drafting their respective chapters for the regional plan. A Progress Report on the Re-

gional Plan is now available online and has been distributed to each of our thirteen member communities highlighting progress made in the last year.

For more information on plan progress or subcommittees contact Jennifer Czysz at jenc@nashuarpc.org or Camille Martineau at camillem@nashuarpc.org.

REGIONAL ONLINE FORUM


Have you visited our online forum yet? What is your favorite place to go in your city or town and why? Tell us where you go for fun, recreation, or just a place that you like to visit and relax.

Share your answer and be a part of our forum online!! You can pinpoint a

specific location on our interactive map and talk about what you love about it or what could make it better. You can also comment on or vote for other people's points!

DID YOU KNOW....

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) has a Facebook

page  ? That you can follow

NRPC on Twitter  ?

And that you can also follow the NRPC's Granite State Future project on Twitter and visit the Facebook page.

We would love to hear from you, so check us out on social media or visit our website at www.nashuarpc.org.